

1-21. (canceled)

22. (currently amended) A controller which controls access to multiple independent networks in a parallel network configuration, the controller comprising:
a site interface connecting the controller to a site by a single logical connection;
at least two network interfaces connecting the controller to respective independent parallel networks; and
a packet path selector which selects between the network interfaces to split a message from the site between the networks by concurrently sending different packets of the message over different network interfaces ~~without requiring packet segmentation and~~ without requiring firewall usage;
whereby the controller uses multiple networks to concurrently carry different pieces of a given message so that unauthorized interception of message packets on fewer than all of the networks used to carry the message will not provide the total content of the message.

23. (previously presented) The controller of claim 22, wherein the controller controls access to multiple independent frame relay networks, and each of the at least two network interfaces comprises a frame relay network interface.

24. (previously presented) The controller of claim 22, wherein the packet path selector also selects between network interfaces according to a load-balancing criterion, thereby promoting balanced loads on devices that carry packets after the packets leave the selected network interfaces.

25. (previously presented) The controller of claim 22, wherein the packet path selector also selects between network interfaces according to a reliability criterion, thereby promoting use of devices that will still carry packets after the packets leave the selected network interfaces, when other devices that could have been selected are not functioning.

26. (previously presented) The controller of claim 22, wherein the controller sends packets out of sequence over the parallel networks.

27. (previously presented) The controller of claim 26, wherein the controller places an encrypted sequence number in at least some of the packets which are sent out of sequence.

28. (previously presented) The controller of claim 22, wherein the controller comprises at least three frame relay network interfaces, each of which is selectable by the packet path selector.

29. (previously presented) The controller of claim 22, wherein the controller operates in a system that utilizes at least one point-to-point connection.

30. (previously presented) The controller of claim 22, wherein the controller operates in a system providing connectivity over at least two frame relay networks from at least two carriers, each frame relay network operating on its own clock which is different from the clock of the other frame relay network.

31. (previously presented) The controller of claim 22, wherein each network interface is an indirect interface tailored to a particular type of frame relay network.

32. (previously presented) The controller of claim 22, wherein each network interface is a direct interface comprising an Ethernet card.

33. (currently amended) A method for combining connections for access to multiple parallel networks, the method comprising the steps of:

a controller receiving packets of a message sent from a site over a single logical connection, the controller having a site interface, at least two network interfaces, and a packet path selector; and

the controller packet path selector selecting between the network interfaces to split the message between parallel networks by concurrently sending different packets of the message over different network interfaces, ~~without requiring packet segmentation and~~ without requiring firewall usage.

34. (previously presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the packet path selector selects between the network interfaces to split the message between parallel frame relay networks.

35. (previously presented) The method of claim 33, further comprising the step of specifying a load-balancing criterion for use by the packet path selector.

36. (previously presented) The method of claim 33, further comprising the step of specifying a reliability criterion for use by the packet path selector.

37. (previously presented) The method of claim 33, further comprising the steps of:
connecting the controller site interface to a site to receive packets of the message from a computer at the site over the single logical connection;
connecting a first network interface of the controller to a first network; and
connecting a second network interface of the controller to a second network which is parallel to and independent of the first network.

38. (previously presented) The method of claim 37, wherein at least one of the steps connecting a network interface of the controller connects the controller to a User-to-Network Interface in a router of a frame relay network.

39. (previously presented) The method of claim 33, further comprising the controller sensing failure of one of the parallel networks and automatically sending packets through at least one other parallel network.

40. (currently amended) A method for combining connections for access to multiple independent parallel frame relay networks, the method comprising the steps of:
sending packets of a message over a single logical connection to a site interface of a controller, the controller having the site interface which receives packets, at least two network interfaces, and a packet path selector which selects between the network interfaces to split the message between the networks by concurrently sending different packets of the message over different network interfaces ~~without requiring packet segmentation and~~ without requiring firewall usage; and
specifying at least one of the following criteria for use by the packet path selector:
a reliability criterion, a load-balancing criterion.